

School Violence: Managing and Minimizing Harm

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the connection between teachers' perceived self-efficacy in responding to violent incidents and training in school violence prevention. Teachers' personal teaching efficacy (PTE), teachers' efficacy in the school as an organisation (TESO), and teachers' outcome efficacy were examined as three indications of their self-efficacy (TOE). Data were gathered from 147 instructors who completed an anonymous survey. The results showed that involvement in school violence training strongly correlated with TOE, but that training did not significantly connect with PTE or TESO. Compared to high school instructors, elementary and junior high school teachers reported greater levels of TOE while dealing with violence. Teachers who claimed to have had a lot of support from the school and TOE in handling violence were shown to be significantly correlated.

Keywords: self-efficacy, ecologically, risk-assessment, potentially violent

INTRODUCTION

School is one of the main arenas of violence among children and youth. Every day, teachers and administrators deal with violent behaviour on a variety of levels, including amongst kids, against property, and between staff and students. However, a lot of instructors lament the violence in schools and want assistance in developing response skills. According to research, teachers and other school personnel need to get thorough training in specific violence prevention tactics if school violence prevention programmes are to be implemented successfully. Only a small number of research have particularly examined teachers' self-efficacy in responding to violence, despite the fact that there is a wealth of literature on school violence. By broadening this emphasis and examining the link between school violence prevention training and teachers' perceived self-efficacy in dealing with verbal and physical violence among students, this study seeks to add to the body of material already in existence [1].

Self-Efficacy of Teachers

According to Bandura, self-efficacy is defined as a person's confidence in their capacity to plan and carry out the necessary actions to achieve future objectives. Self-efficacy is a key factor in how people see themselves and serves as a mediator between one's own knowledge, abilities, and beliefs, on the one hand, and their actions, on the other. The idea differentiates between current ability, self-belief, and results. As a result, even those with identical skills may experience different results due to variations in how effective they feel they are [2].

The conviction that teachers have in helping their pupils accomplish more is reflected in their self-evaluations of their capacity to arrange information and abilities as well as their capacity to carry out the steps necessary to reach certain objectives. According to academics, general self-efficacy and teaching self-efficacy are included in instructors' perceived self-efficacy. A measure of instructors' self-efficacy created by Gibson and Dembo has two components: personal efficacy and overall instructional effectiveness. While general teaching efficacy pertains to instructors' overall conviction in the teaching profession as a way of boosting student accomplishment, independent of a specific teacher's personal skills, personal efficacy refers to teachers' belief in their capacity to enhance their students' performance. Cherniss provided a larger approach based on the task performance, interpersonal connections, and interpersonal interactions in the school organisation as three aspects of teachers' self-efficacy. Similar terms were used by Friedman and Wax to define teachers' self-efficacy, but they enlarged the concept to include teachers' opinions of the administration's support. The successes of the kids have mostly been used to assess teachers' self-efficacy. According to studies, self-efficacy significantly affects students' academic success. Researchers stress that connections inside the organisation and the level of support instructors get from their peers have a major impact on their self-efficacy. Poor levels of teachers' self-efficacy were linked to low support levels in schools, and these instructors were less willing to deal with the issues that their children faced [3-4].

SCHOOLS VIOLENCE

The problem of school violence has drawn a lot of study interest since the 1980s. Three key areas have been the subject of most study. The first topic is violence among various age groups and its many forms. The second concern is with the traits of violent students and their victims, and the third is with the assessment of programmes to avoid school violence [5-6].

Few efforts have been made to concentrate on the macro system level, and the bulk of programmes to reduce violence in schools have concentrated on the individual level. However, the majority of experts concur that multifaceted preventative programmes are more successful than those that just concentrate on the individual level. The effectiveness of prevention programmes may be increased by integrating different focuses, such as student targeting, staff training, and parent-school collaboration. A single school-based method used in isolation won't have much of an impact, either. Short-term treatments are less likely than multiyear programmes to provide long-term benefits. Therefore, multiyear evaluations of coordinated schoolwide programming that integrates complete person-centered and environmental packages of efficient techniques are better understood in order to support preventative research. Researchers emphasise that there is a dearth of information about the efficacy of the majority of preventive programmes, which makes it challenging for schools to make judgements about which programmes are most likely to achieve their objectives. Future study, according to Wilson et al., should focus on more complex, environmentally based issues such "How can schools successfully create complete packages of preventative methods and deliver them in a high-quality manner?" rather than just asking "Which programme works?" [7].

Teachers and other school employees are overwhelmed by school-related violence and unclear of how to deal with it despite the establishment of school preventative programmes for decreasing violence. The efforts to keep schools safe might be severely hampered by this uncertainty. According to a research on the impact of a bully prevention programme on teachers' self-efficacy, the programme successfully enhanced teachers' awareness of bullying behaviours and boosted their confidence in their ability to deal with them. Despite the significance of teaching teachers how to intervene in violent situations, this issue is not a core component of the teacher training curriculum, and only a small number of studies have looked at how training affects teachers' perceptions of their own effectiveness. The findings of previous research indicate that the majority of pre-service teachers did not participate in any kind of violence prevention training as part of their regular teacher training. The results show that the majority of pre-service teachers reported having less confidence in their capacity to deal with bullying and being in favour of teacher training programmes on how to do so. They also said that they felt more comfortable working with the parents of the bullied children than the parents of the victims. The training made female pre-service teachers feel more competent in teaching violence prevention than male pre-service teachers, according to a study of perceived self-efficacy among pre-service teachers engaged in violence prevention courses. Additionally, compared to those in kindergartens and elementary schools, pre-service teachers in secondary education consistently scored lower on effectiveness expectations [8-10].

TRAINING FOR PREVENTING SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The current curriculum places a strong emphasis on preparing instructors to handle verbal and physical abuse among pupils. The program's fundamental premise was that it is the duty of the teacher to address and react to student aggression immediately. As a result, they need expert tools in order to deal with the issue efficiently. The programme has three main objectives: (a) to provide comprehensive information on existing violence prevention programmes as well as broad theoretical knowledge on the topic; (b) to examine various approaches for dealing with violent students and assess how appropriate they are for various types of violent students. (c) to improve the teachers' abilities to deal with violent incidents. A college of education sponsored the curriculum, and weekly sessions were conducted to train the instructors. The idea was to make learning an ongoing process in which instructors would use and evaluate what they had learned in class in the course of their job. This goal was also supported by the body of research already in existence, which has shown that quick fixes for violence are ineffective in the long run. The first section of the prevention programme concentrated on issues like: an introduction to theories that address the causes of violence; distinctions between various forms of violence; gender differences; reasons why violence occurs in schools; and a survey of current prevention initiatives and therapeutic modalities [11]. The program's second section concentrated on teaching instructors in three key areas for addressing violent occurrences. This goal was founded on earlier studies that showed several areas of intervention to be more successful than concentrating on the individual level. The training approach concentrated on handling each aggressive pupil individually at the micro level. The instructors were required to assess any instances of aggressive behaviour in their courses and create an intervention strategy. The learning session included information on how to interact with and include the parents of aggressive pupils in the healing process. This objective was founded on research showing that instructors struggle to deal with the parents of violent kids. Studies have also emphasised the value of home-school collaboration in preventative initiatives. During the workshop, instructors recounted an intervention they had with a violent kid, including the challenges they faced and the improvements that resulted from the intervention. On a classroom level, the programme attempted to

enhance teachers' abilities and knowledge of their responsibility for creating rules against violence in the classroom, creating methods for monitoring violent behaviour, and engaging students in dialogues about violent behaviour. Teachers were obliged to carry out an activity in their classrooms as part of this programme, and then reflect on the experience. The macro level attempted to train teachers on how to include other parties in handling violent situations, such as the school administration, community-based therapy agencies, and sometimes even control agents like the police or probation authorities [12].

The current study

According to a study of the research literature, self-efficacy has mostly been studied in relation to instructors' roles in elevating their students' successes. Additionally, very few studies have examined how well-equipped instructors are to cope with violence in schools. By evaluating the association between involvement in a school violence prevention programme and teachers' self-efficacy in handling verbal and physical violence among students, this study seeks to add to the body of knowledge in the field [13].

The pursuing research queries were looked at [14]:

- Are there any changes in the self-efficacy of participating instructors compared to those who did not engage in the programme when it comes to handling student violence?
- Do sociodemographic factors like gender, teaching experience, and academic background have an impact on teachers' self-efficacy in dealing with violence?

QUICK FACTS AND ADVICE

Schools are very safe places where every school works to avoid school violence. Promoting school safety requires active participation from parents, teachers, and students. Adults should model leadership by assuring students that schools are often highly secure environments for kids and teens and by reminding them of the security precautions and student support systems currently in place. An adult can [15-16]:

1. Establish a friendly and secure school environment (e.g., school-wide behavioural expectations, caring school climate programs, positive interventions and supports, and psychological and counselling services).
2. Promote student engagement in safety planning and encourage students to accept responsibility for their role in ensuring safe school settings.
3. Reiterate the regulations of the school and ask that any possible issues be reported by kids to administrators.
4. Emphasize to kids the value of bucking peer pressure to behave carelessly.
5. Establish anonymous reporting channels (such as "tell an adult" systems, suggestion boxes, and student hotlines).
6. Regulate entry to the school's building (e.g., designated entrance with all other access points locked from the exterior).
7. Monitor visitors to the school.
8. Keep an eye on the parking lots and common areas of the school, including the corridors, cafeterias, and sports grounds.
9. Mention the presence of security personnel, school resource officers, or local police partnerships.
10. Make use of security tools.
11. Create crisis plans and educate all staff members on disaster preparedness.
12. Create teams and processes for performing threat assessments and risk assessments.
13. Conduct routine drills for school readiness (e.g., intruder alerts, weather, fire, lockdown, evacuation).
14. Establish collaborations between the school and the community to improve safety measures for pupils away from the campus.
15. List incident data related to school safety. Local statistics from several school districts show that school violence is on the decline. Citing local statistics when appropriate makes families and children feel more at peace.
16. Be an outwardly friendly presence at school, introducing yourself to parents and children and stopping by classes.
17. Conduct an annual assessment of all school safety policies and procedures to make sure that existing crisis plans and emergency response protocols effectively address new school safety concerns.
18. Examine the district's and local emergency responders' communication networks. Additionally, it should specify how and where parents will be notified in case of an emergency.

19. Describe the present school-based violence prevention initiatives and courses. In particular, emphasise the school's efforts to educate pupils nonviolent dispute resolution and healthy interpersonal connection skills as alternatives to violence.
20. Schools are taking steps to increase safety.

In response to strong public pressure, school officials are acting and putting in place initiatives to reduce school violence. These initiatives comprise [18-19]:

School policies designed to prevent violence by punishing those who commit violence; instruction-based programmes designed to address the precursors of violence, including bullying; profiling of potentially violent individuals; counselling of at-risk students; conflict mediation and resolution. Physical surveillance, including weapons deterrence and the presence of security guards or officers on campus.

There are almost 200 institutional programmes alone, thus the sheer quantity of these programmes might be overwhelming. And each of these techniques has a different focus and distinct aims. Some people want to increase physical safety by avoiding violent extremes like shootings. Others advocate for a supportive environment in schools (i.e., one in which students and staff feel protected). While some are reactive, others take a proactive approach to attempting to stop the emergence of violent tendencies. While some programmes emphasise skill development, others depend on the deterrent power of punishment. Some strategies target kids who have been recognised as "at risk," while others are intended for the whole school community, often including parents or the larger community. Lastly, some strategies put more emphasis on resolving problems than they do on identifying problem pupils. Therefore, attempts to reduce violence in schools are founded on radically divergent sets of presumptions about what functions. Unfortunately, the underlying assumptions are seldom challenged, thus these methods may not be as effective as we would want. Below, each of these strategies is covered in greater depth [20].

PERSONAL SUSPECTION

The deployment of campus security and police personnel, as well as firearms deterrence, are presently among the most widespread physical surveillance techniques employed in schools. These tactics are designed to stop the most severe types of violence.

armed deterrence Improved physical security measures aim to stop children from bringing weapons to school, even though bullying is far more common than weapon-based violence. In major metropolitan middle and high schools, metal detectors and inspections of student lockers and book bags are not unusual. With these precautions in place, in fact, fewer firearms are seized than without them, suggesting that pupils are bringing guns to school less often. It's less apparent if searches and metal detectors can stop a planned incident from happening.

The issues surrounding why teenagers bring weapons to school are unaddressed by weapons deterrence.

According to administrators' most recent reports, some schools are using fewer metal detectors and searches because they seem to make children more fearful and anxious. Deterrence of firearms may thereby improve pupils' physical safety but damage their psychological safety. Additionally, it doesn't address the fundamental causes of why children bring firearms to school [21].

On campus Security

The use of security personnel and guards on school premises who are hired by the district, school, or local law enforcement is becoming more and more accepted. This is particularly relevant in light of the shooting incident that occurred at Granite Hills High School in the vicinity of San Diego, California, when a campus police officer was able to rapidly intervene and stop more carnage. Campus police' responsibilities range from keeping an eye on the campus and surroundings to helping the administration with disciplinary matters. In the spring of 2000, as part of the Justice Department's COPS in Schools initiative, President Clinton increased the deployment of campus cops by allocating more than \$60 million to fund 452 officers nationally. According to media sources, President Bush may treble the amount of government funding for this initiative. The potential long-term or simultaneous impacts of uniformed police' presence on students' perceptions of safety are less well understood. For instance, we cannot assume that children perceive police as their supporters or defenders, even if their presence may provide administrators and parents piece of mind. In fact, the presence of uniformed cops may cause kids to feel untrustworthy, which would have a negative impact on the atmosphere in the classroom. The use of physical

surveillance techniques like metal detectors, searches, and security guards may be able to foretell the onset of more disorder, according to some early research [22].

STUDENT POLICIES

In schools around the country, a range of standards relating to behaviour and clothing are enforced. Zero-tolerance rules apply to laws and regulations that specifically prohibit violence because they penalise violations with suspension or expulsion after only one. Many of these regulations address the presence of guns on school grounds, while others focus on drug usage or possession. Some school districts and districts have implemented zero-tolerance anti-bullying policies to combat the causes of violence.

Get-tough tactics are thought to deter aggressive pupils and reduce school violence by sending a message. However, they could potentially make issues worse.

No matter what their precise focuses are, these zero-tolerance rules include a clear declaration of the penalties (i.e., punishment). These "get-tough" measures are thought to deter aggressive adolescents and lessen school violence by sending a message. However, they could potentially make issues worse. The likelihood of eventual violence rises with frequent school changes. Additionally, suspensions are one of the strongest predictors of dropping out of school, which is linked to delinquency. One reason for the connections between delinquency, dropping out, and suspension is that a kid who is not enrolled in school has more unstructured time and is more likely to interact with troubled classmates. Therefore, in certain instances, the use of punishment by schools with zero-tolerance rules may raise the risk of violence for both the individual student and society as a whole [23].

DIRECTIVE PROGRAMS

If a programme has many lessons that are taught by instructors or other adults, it is said to be instructional. With the assumption that by focusing on behaviours that anticipate violence (such as bullying and impulsive conduct), more severe expressions of aggressiveness would be minimised, these programmes often concentrate on precursors or antecedents of violent behaviour. Aiming to improve social competence are other programmes like social skills training and character education.

Target audiences for instructional programmes vary; some are created as specialised programmes for "at-risk" adolescents, while others are created for all students and the whole "system." The Bully/Victim Program, which was created in its original form by Dan Olweus in Norway, is an example of a systematic programme. The Center for Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado in Boulder, together with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other organisations, chose this programme as the only model programme for school-based prevention at the secondary level in the Blueprint Programs in 1996. By modifying how schools respond to bullying occurrences, the programme seeks to change societal norms. In addition to having clear anti-harassment regulations, the programme aims to increase staff and student social awareness. A number of activities are included in instructional materials created for all students (not just bullies and victims) to help them understand issues from the viewpoint of the victim of bullying and to increase awareness of how bystanders might encourage the bully. The programme offers teacher training as well as programme details for parents [24].

By modifying how schools respond to bullying occurrences and raising societal awareness, systemic anti-bullying initiatives change social norms.

For elementary schools, there are a lot of instructional violence prevention programmes accessible, but there aren't many that are developed for secondary school students. The most effective secondary school programmes are those that target at-risk adolescents, who are often combative pupils. The majority of these programmes, such as Adolescent Transitions Program (ATP), Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP), and Positive Adolescent Choices Training (PACT), feature adult-led small group sessions on topics including anger management and conflict resolution. Other interactive teaching techniques, such as role-playing, are used. All of these programmes are curriculum-based, but they are only sometimes integrated into a bigger framework of a school-wide preventive strategy. Instead, they are often conducted like group therapy sessions. Although there is little information on such programmes' long-term impact, their short-term results are encouraging. Recent long-term follow-up research demonstrates that recurrent treatments that solely target problem kids might backfire. The probability that high-risk kids will go on to participate in anti-social conduct is increased rather than decreased when they are grouped together because it seems to act as "deviance training" that reinforces bad behavioural patterns.

POTENTIALLY VIOLENT YOUTH PROFILING

Early identification or profiling of possibly dangerous children was one strategy that received popularity soon after the well publicised school killings. This strategy is predicated on the idea that we can foretell who will act violently. Despite the fact that there is a lot of knowledge regarding the early indicators of violent conduct, many pupils really meet these "profiles" and relatively few will ever engage in violent action. As a result, a lot of kids who would never harm another person are classified as possibly violent. The term alone may cause stigmatisation, and if it's used in conjunction with a segregated group intervention, it can severely restrict the options available to the identified pupils [25].

Many pupils are classified as possibly aggressive even if they would never harm anybody.

ADVICE AND MEDIATION

Other methods of preventing violence include counselling troubled pupils and, where necessary, mediating particular conflicts. These strategies are reactive rather than proactive. The counselling strategy is predicated on the notion that troubled pupils need special attention and resources. Parents and teachers are often involved in counselling. Contrarily, conflict mediation is incident-based as opposed to person-based; the objective is to negotiate and settle disputes in a positive way as soon as they arise. Programs for mediation and conflict resolution provide chances to practise and model important negotiating and settlement strategies.

The mediation and counselling might be handled by a variety of school staff members. In some schools, officials who oversee disciplinary issues, such as assistant principals, also manage counselling and mediation. Some schools employ "violence prevention coordinators" or certified school psychologists/counselors. There are no set educational requirements for coordinators of school violence prevention, therefore their professional credentials vary. However, the expertise and training of the staff may be crucial elements in deciding the success or failure of these strategies.

Peer mediation is another strategy. Despite the fact that these initiatives may be successful in elementary schools, some data suggests that high school mediators are not adequately selected.

CONCLUSIONS

In light of the literature assessment, the findings provide a number of theoretical ramifications. First off, the study adds to the body of knowledge by focusing on the connection between involvement in school violence prevention training and teachers' self-efficacy in dealing with violence. This is because there is virtually no research on teachers coping with violence. The report also sheds further light on the need of educating teachers in a programme to avoid school violence. The results show that participation in the violence prevention training programme significantly improved instructors' ability to cope with violent incidents. This finding implies that initiatives to reduce incidents of school violence must also actively engage teacher development programmes. The process of teacher preparation is significantly impacted by this result on a practical level. It will be feasible to better educate teachers for coping with violent incidents by integrating courses on school violence prevention into the teacher training curriculum. When students are doing their practicum in schools at the conclusion of the teacher training programme, these courses would be most beneficial.

The extremely small sample size makes it difficult to draw broad conclusions from the study's results, despite the fact that they add to our understanding of the influence of school violence prevention programmes on teachers' self-efficacy in dealing with violence. Additionally, the current research did not look at how factors like the teacher's position at the school, the connection between interventions for various forms of violence, and teachers' perceived self-efficacy may have an impact. Teachers' self-efficacy in dealing with physical violence is probably different from their self-efficacy in dealing with other sorts of violence, including vandalism or indirect hostility. These limitations indicate the need for more study in order to better understand how participation in training programmes for preventing school violence affects teachers' confidence in handling violent situations.

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